THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (c) The Eleventh Five Year Plan of Sikkim is yet to be finalized. An outlay of Rs. 691.14 crore has been approved for the Annual Plan 2007-08 of Sikkim. This outlay is to be funded through State's own resources of Rs. 217.65 crore and Central Assistance of Rs. 473.49 crore including one time Additional Cenral Assistance (ACA) of Rs. 20.48 crore and Special Plan Assistance (SPA) of Rs.45.24 crore. The outlay of Rs. 691.14 crore includes schemes under various sectors such as Agriculture & Allied Activities, Rural Development, Irrigation and Flood Control, Energy, Industry & Minerals, Transport, Communication, Science, Technology & Environment, Tourism, Education, Medical & Public Health, Water Supply and Sanitation Housing, Urban Development, etc.

Conversion of State roads into NHs in Punjab

31. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of State roads in the State of Punjab converted to National Highways during the last three years ending 31-03-07, year-wise;

(b) the specific State roads in the State converted to National Highways during the current financial year and proposed to be converted during the next two financial years; and

(c) the expenditure incurred for the conversion of the State roads into National Highways during the last three years ending 31.03.07 and proposed to be incurred during 2007-08 and the next two years for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) None of the State road was converted to National Highways in Punjab during the last three years as well as during the current financial year. At present, emphasis is being given for development of existing National Highways like widening to two lanes, strengthening, geometric improvements, reconsruction of old/weak bridges etc. Instead of declaring more roads as National Highways. Hence, considering the constraint of resources, there is no proposal for declaration of any new National Highways in Punjab, at present.

(c) Does not arise.

Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project

32. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government had informed the Supreme Court that it would consider executing the Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project through an alternative alignment so that the 30-km. long Ramar Sethu/Adam's Bridge could be protected from damage;

(b) whether the Central Government have taken note of the wide-ranging public sentiment, which has been expressed in respect of the decision to proceed with the construction of the Sethusamudram Shipping Channel; and

(c) if so, wehther any final decision in this regard has been taken?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (c) Pursuant to the submissions made before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by the Government Counsel on 14.9.2007 in respect of certain Transfer Cases and writ petitions relating to the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project, the Government has constituted a Committee consisting of eminent persons with the terms of reference to invite objections and suggestions from all concerned including the writ petitioners having interest in the subject matter and to consider all suggestions/proposals/documents after giving them a personal hearing. The report of the Committee is awaited.

Shipbuilding yard at Dharma in Orissa

33. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up a state-of-the-art joint-venture shipbuilding/ship repair yard at Dharma in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this labour-intensive industry would generate a good amount of employment opportunities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) At present, no such proposal is under consideration of the Government of India. However, the Government of Orissa has intimated that it has received a proposal for setting up a ship building yard and ship repair facilities at the month of the Dharma river in Bhadrak district in Orissa as a joint venture project. The project proposed to be implemented in three phases, has a potential of providing direct as well as indirect employment to about 56,300 persons. Final decision in the matter is yet to be taken by the Government of Orissa.

Repair of NHs in NER

34. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various National Highways including NH-31-A in NER are in a deplorable condition and they have become rough and rugged due to excessive rainfall/flood this year; and

(b) if so, the action taken for repairing these highways, NH-wise/State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) National Highways including NH-31-A in North-Eastern Region are being maintained in traffic worthy condition within the availability of funds. State-wise funds during 2007-08 for repair of damaged stretches of various National Highways being maintained by State Public Works Department in North Eastern Region due to rain/flood are as below. As far as National Highways being maintained by Border Roads Organisation are concerned, these are maintained by the funds provided under original and maintenance head, and no separate fund is provided under flood damage repair.